

The Daily Charge

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Telling the MND-Baghdad Story

Saturday, June 16, 2007



(Courtesy photo)

Happy Father's Day!

Zapata, Texas, native Sgt. 1st Class Noe Barrera, the senior logistician for the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, his wife, Staff Sgt. Tracey Barrera assigned to the 15th Sustainment Brigade, 1st Cav. Div., and their son Noe, 10, stop for a family photo while enjoying their pre-deployment vacation at South Padre Island, Texas. See page 3 for full article.

Baghdad in Brief

Raid Nets Nine Suspects

By Maj. Kirk Luedeke
4th IBCT, 1st Inf. Div. PAO

BAGHDAD- Multi-National Division-Baghdad troops launched a successful early morning raid in the east Doura neighborhood of the Rashid District, detaining nine individuals suspected of running a bomb-making cell June 14.

Soldiers from "Bandit Troop," 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment seized the detainees without incident. The individuals detained are believed to be involved in an Al-Qaeda roadside bomb and recruiting ring that had recently launched attacks against the unit in Doura.

Tips from local residents led Simonsen's troop to conduct raid, which was executed just after midnight. The suspects will be held for further questioning.

US, Iraqi Troops Uncover Largest Weapons Cache to Date in Yarmouk Neighborhood

By 1st Lt. Brian Cooke
2-32 Field Artillery Regt.

BAGHDAD - Multi-National Division - Baghdad Soldiers, working in conjunction with Iraq Army troops, uncovered a large cache of explosives and bomb-making materials in the western Baghdad neighborhood of Yarmouk June 13.

Iraqi troops from 2nd Battalion, 5th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division initially discovered a weapons cache

while on patrol in the Yarmouk neighborhood. The cache contained 113 land mines, 63 grenades, three rockets, three mortars, two gas masks, five washing machine timers, more than 2000 rounds of AK-47 ammunition and seven boxes of various electronics and other assorted explosives.

It is the largest weapons cache discovery by either U.S. or Iraqi forces to date in the Yarmouk area. The Iraqi troops quickly notified their liaison officer at the Joint Security

Station Torch, where both Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces work and live together.

"This is just more proof to us that having the JSS and being out in the community is what's allowing us to work so effectively with the Iraqi Army," said Major Jim MacGregor, executive officer of 2-32nd FA.

The 2nd Battalion, 32nd Field Artillery Regiment received the report and sent a



(Photo by 1st Lt. Patrick Henson, 2-32 FA Regt.)

A weapons cache found in the Iraqi capital's Yarmouk neighborhood by U.S. and Iraqi Soldiers June 13.

See Cache Page 2

Troops Uncover Cache

Cache

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patrol to the site of the cache to assist the Iraqi troops. Upon arrival the U.S. patrol leader, 1st Lt. Nick Bell, received an update from the Iraqi battalion commander, Col. Ali Al-Obaydi.

Ali told the lieutenant that a gardener was trimming the bushes of an empty house for which he was the caretaker, and noticed several bags hidden behind the shrubs. Upon closer inspection, the gardener identified what he believed to be hand grenades and promptly called the Iraqi Army for help. Col. Ali responded to the call and then sent word for U.S. assistance to dispose of the explosives.

McGregor pointed to the tip coming from a resident as another sign of progress in Yarmouk.

Bell and Ali's troops set up a joint cordon of the area to secure the cache and ensure the safety of local residents. Once the area was secure, an explosive ordnance disposal team was called in to destroy the munitions.

Roadside Bomb Targeting Soldiers Injures Seven Civilians in Adhamiyah

2-82 Abn. Div. Public Affairs

BAGHDAD - A roadside bomb struck a patrol of Multi-National Division - Baghdad Soldiers and Iraqi Army troops traveling through Baghdad's Adhamiyah District June 14, injuring seven civilians who were out on the street when the bomb went off.

The bomb struck a heavily armored Bradley Fighting Vehicle, but no Soldiers were injured. However, shrapnel from the explosion sprayed into a group of civilians who were standing nearby on the sidewalk.

Two of the residents were seriously injured, including a man with severe lacerations to his neck and another man who suffered a heart attack following the attack. U.S. and Iraqi soldiers tended the wounded at the scene and helped evacuate the casualties to a nearby hospital for further treatment.

The joint patrol of U.S. Soldiers from Company C, 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment and Iraqi troops from 1st Battalion, 1st Brigade, 11th Army Division was traveling through a crowded area with shops and families mingling outside their houses when the roadside bomb detonated.

Following the attack, the Soldiers

dismounted and rushed to the aid of the injured civilians. Staff Sgt. James Lesco kicked in a door and dragged the wounded inside, in order to seek cover from any further terrorist attacks and called medic Pfc. Jonathan Hewett to apply first aid. Their company commander, Capt. Cecil Strickland, radioed for an ambulance.

The most critical casualty was an elderly man whose heart had stopped from the shock of the blast. Hewett believed he would die if he didn't get to a hospital as soon as possible.

"I told the (commander) that he needed to be loaded up and gotten out of there immediately or he was going to die right there on the floor," said Hewett, a native of Columbus, Miss.

Acting quickly, the Soldiers moved the casualties outside and into their vehicles, and then raced them across town to the Al Numan Hospital, where doctors took over and were able to resuscitate the man.

Recently, innocent bystanders have suffered from failed terrorist attacks against Coalition Forces in Adhamiyah.

"They don't care who they hurt," Hewett said.

(Background photo by Sgt. Mike Pryor, 2-82 Abn. Div. Public Affairs)

Arabic Phrase of the Day

waalid

Defined:
father

Iraq 3-Day Weather Report



Today

High: 113
Low: 81



Tomorrow

High: 111
Low: 82



Monday

High: 113
Low: 83

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A Far Away Father's Day in Baghdad

By Spc. Nathan Hoskins
1st ACB Public Affairs

CAMP TAJI, Iraq - Like many holidays and special recognition days, here in Iraq, they are just another day, but this doesn't mean that Soldiers who are fathers discount Father's Day.

For at least one 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division Soldier, Father's Day will always be special - no matter where he is - because of the little one that entitles him to the name dad.

Zapata, Texas, native Sgt. 1st Class Noe Barrera, the senior logistician for 1st ACB, the father of Noe Isael Barrera, 10, knows what it's like to go through a deployment constantly wishing he were with his son.

"Within the last four years I've been deployed twice," said the proud father. "I miss (Noe) like crazy."

Barrera is a veteran of Camp Taji, along with his wife of nearly 15 years, Staff Sgt. Tracey Barrera. They both deployed to this same forward

operating base two years ago. But being away from his son is not something he grows accustomed to, he said.

"I've been blessed my entire life that I've not only had everything that I needed, but a lot of what I just wanted. Still, there's nothing in this world that I could ask for that could replace me being home with my son and my family," he said.

The difficulties go beyond just being geographically separated from his son. Once he and his wife return from Iraq, he knows that he is the same person, but his son has changed, he said.

"My son can do different things at grandma and grandpa's house that he (is not allowed to do) at my house," Barrera said with a chuckle.

Right now, Noe is staying with his grandma and grandpa, Barrera's parents Beatriz and Gildo Gutierrez, in Zapata, he said.

"I've got to keep in mind that I haven't been there ... I can't hold him to the standard that I (normally) would," he said.

If Barrera was home with

his son, who is enjoying his summer before fifth grade begins, he would be taking him fishing and hunting, he said.

His son, an avid hunter and fisherman, or fisherboy, would pick a hunting trip over Disney World, said his father.

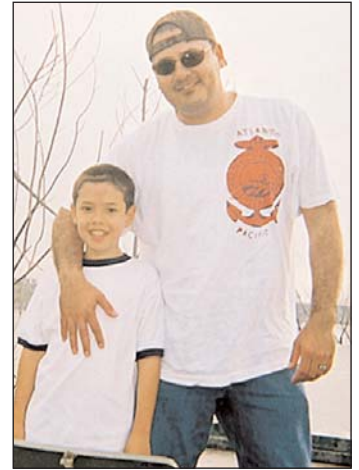
But since they are thousands of miles away, Barrera settles for the few minutes he gets to spend on the phone with him, he said.

"If I could, I'd call him every day, but it gets a little expensive," he said. "I know the key dates, so if he's got something going on, I'll stay up late to call him in the morning."

Not discounting what Soldiers with no children feel, Barrera admits there is something different stirring in a parent's heart while away from their children, he said.

"It's a special bond that parents have with their kids. I'm not saying it's harder (than those without children), but it tugs at you a little bit in a different way because they're your own flesh and blood," he said.

Being with his son and



(Courtesy photo)

Zapata, Texas, native Sgt. 1st Class Noe Barrera, the senior enlisted logistician for the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cav. Div., stands with his son, Noe, 10, during a recent fishing trip when he was home on leave in April.

wife is Barrera's number one priority in life, so when he is away from any of them, it is always difficult - no matter what day it is, he said.

"For me, my family is it. Because one day I'm going to take this uniform off and all that's left is my family," he said.

Deployed Dads: Some Milestones Missed, but Memories Made

By Pfc. Nathaniel Smith
4-1 Inf. Div. Public Affairs

BAGHDAD - The high school senior was sitting with her classmates during her graduation ceremony looking into the bleachers at her family. Everyone was there, except one important face: her father's.

As a Soldier currently deployed to Iraq, her father had tried to make it home, knowing the importance of the event. The young lady, while disappointed, understood why he was gone, but didn't necessarily like it.

With the ceremony over and the diplomas handed out, she went to greet her family, and then she received perhaps the

greatest graduation gift of all. Standing with her mother and siblings was Sgt. 1st Class Lonnie Powell, "Dad" to the student, Loneia Powell.

He had made it to the milestone event after all, and the father and daughter wept tears of joy that he was there to share in her special moment.

The story sounds like something out of a movie. It's the part where the women cry as the guys fall asleep, but for the Powells, it's a true story that took place in May, and meant the world to one young woman taking a first real step away from the nest.

Powell, the equal opportunity advisor for the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division from Tampa, Fla.,

(Background photo by Pfc. Nathaniel Smith, 4-1 Inf. Div. Public Affairs)

and father of three, will be celebrating his third Father's Day away from his children; the first in 1991 and again in 2003.

"It never gets easier," Powell said. "The only reason why it was a little easier the first deployment, my daughter was only three at the time, but the second wasn't any easier. This time they understand, but I think this one is the hardest one for them."

While this one may be the most difficult, Powell said he and his kids know how to better stay in touch.

"We all learned from the last two deployments," he said. "We stay in touch

See Milestones Page 4

Sole Bread Winner:

Single Father Sacrifices in Iraq for Children Back Home

By Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp
1-1 Cav. Div. Public Affairs

CAMP TAJI, Iraq - Nearly three years ago during his first tour to Iraq, things were a little different for Sgt. Chester Temple, a supply specialist for Battery A, 1st Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment.

He had a wife and twin premature babies to worry about - a boy, Trey, and girl, Abbey, who weighed just a little less than three pounds each and could fit in the palm of his hands.

Shortly after their birth, he had flown home to Fort Hood, Texas on emergency leave to see them for the first time but then had to return to Iraq and when his tour was over, his wife moved far away leaving him custody of the

ailing twins. Eventually, a painful divorce left him a single father raising his children.

For his second deployment to Iraq, Temple had to leave his son and daughter in the care of his parents, who live in Killeen, Texas.

"The kids are doing really well now, they're nearly three years old and healthy," said Temple. "I had no worries leaving them with my parents. I'm glad to know that my babies are being taken care of."

He said he worried more when his children were younger and dealing with health issues. It's easier now.

"My son has become a hunk, getting big," Temple said. "His sister was always bigger than he was, but now



(Photo by Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp, 1-1 Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

Sgt. Chester Temple, a supply noncommissioned officer for Battery A, 1st Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment and a native of Fort Hood, Texas, re-stocks his supply room at Camp Taji, Iraq June 13.

he's outgrown her. But they're both healthy and happy."

"My parents are great people. I was raised by the best," he said. "I really appreciate what they're doing for me and the sacrifices they're making at home," added Temple. "They're communicating well now and can tell you when they're hungry and thirsty."

Along with Abbey and Trey, Temple has an 8-year-old son, Austin, from his first marriage, who lives with his mother in Alabama.

"Whenever I go on leave, I go see him. I really miss him a lot and I know he misses me, too," said Temple, who said he has good relations with his first wife.

"I email Austin a lot and he has a good understanding of what I'm doing out here," said Temple. "The twins don't really understand, they just think that daddy's at work."

"I also call them on the phone," he added. "They tell me they love me and miss me. Trey will usually tell me what he's

watching on TV and Abbey will look at the phone trying to figure out how I got in there."

"The best thing to do is for me to engulf myself in my work," said Temple. "When I can't contain thinking about them, a telephone call always softens things up and makes it easier to cope. It can be lonely (without your family), but I joined the military for a sense of pride-my family heritage." Temple noted that his father retired from the Army and both of his grandfathers, most of his uncles and three brothers have all served in the military.

Most of the things he and his kids like to do together involve being outdoors, but there is one special place he likes to take them - the zoo.

For Father's Day this year, Temple said he hopes to convey a simple message to people who ask him why he's in Iraq.

"I love this," he said. "Too often the American people as a whole forget the price that's been paid for freedom."

"I Try to Talk to Him Every Night..."

Milestones From Page 3

more, we write more, e-mail helps out a lot and the (video teleconference) helps out a lot. The phone helps out. The only thing that existed back then (during Operation Desert Storm) was regular mail."

While Powell had the benefit of knowing what to expect as a father while deployed, other younger Soldiers weren't as lucky. Cpl. Kyle Patterson, a vehicle commander on the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team's Personal Security Detachment from Kirksville, Mo., is one such Soldier.

Patterson, the father of

17-month-old Lane, will be celebrating his first Father's Day away from his son. While he doesn't like being away from his child, the infantryman said it's for a worthwhile cause.

"I try to talk to him every night on the phone," Patterson said. "He recognizes my voice, and I send videos of me talking to him."

While Patterson had less of an idea about what to expect from this deployment as a father, he had a simple strategy for preparing himself and his son for what was coming.

"I tried to spend every minute I could with him," Patterson said.



(Photo courtesy of www.mld-trade-rumors.com)

Some Surprises as Baseball Heads to Mid-summer Classic

With the National Basketball Association championship decided (yawn!), it's time to turn our attention to Major League Baseball. You remember, that sport that used to be America's pastime before television made the National Football League America's passion?

Even though it's only mid-June as I write this, this year's baseball season has provided some very interesting story lines heading into mid-season.

Hometown Heroes

If the season were to end today (as I pen this column), my beloved Milwaukee Brewers would be headed into the post season, since they have a 5.5-game lead on the second place Chicago Cubs. The Brewers, in fact, are the only team in the National League Central Division with a winning record. The defending champion St. Louis Cardinals are 6-and-a-half games behind, with a 28-35 record to this point.

Milwaukee has been led by youngsters finding their stroke at the major league level, most notably first baseman Prince Fielder who leads the senior circuit with 23 home runs, and shortstop J.J. Hardy who has hit 16 already. Their closer, Francisco Cordero, leads the majors with 24 saves thus far, and had ripped off 21 straight before blowing a save chance earlier in the month.

The San Diego Padres have the best record in the NL, at 38-27, but the Los Angeles Dodgers are only a half-game behind the NL West front runners and would be the wild card team if the regular season could, miraculously, end today.

In the east, the New York Mets are holding off the Philadelphia Phillies by two games, but don't count out Bobby Cox's Atlanta Braves who are only two-and-a-half games back.

Bosox Back on Top

The Boston Red Sox have the best record in the American League, at 41-24,

Trigger Pull

Master Sgt.
Dave Larsen



and still hold a 7.5-game lead over the surging New York Yankees. The Red Sox have had the best starting pitching in the AL, with Josh Beckett leading the staff with nine wins through June 15.

The Yanks decided to start hitting again, and coupled with the arrival of Roger Clemens, they may eat into the Red Sox division lead over the second half of the season. Two hitters have helped keep the Yankees competitive in an up and down first half: Third baseman Alex Rodriguez has hit 25 homers to go with 68 runs batted in, both major league highs at this point. Catcher Jorge Posada is earning his all-star berth with a un-catcher-like .351 batting average. Maybe he just got jealous of last year's batting champ, Minnesota catcher Joe Mauer.

Regardless of who wins the AL East, expect both the Red Sox and the Yankees to see the post-season this year.

The Los Angeles Angels have a five-game lead over the Seattle Mariners and Oakland A's in the AL West, while the Cleveland Indians have a two game lead over the defending AL champion Detroit Tigers in the central division.

If the season ended today, Detroit would make it into the playoffs as the wild card, not the Bronx Bombers.

Individual Honorable Mentions

Based on his power numbers, RBIs and quick start, the AL Most Valuable Player for the season's first half would easily be Alex Rodriguez. A case could be made for Tiger outfielder Magglio Ordonez, who leads the majors in hitting

(.367) and is third in the AL RBI race with 60, six more than the NL leader.

The Angels' John Lackey is the majors' first 10-game winner, but Boston's Josh Beckett has been the ace of the league's best team, so Beckett would get my vote for a mid-season Cy Young Award in the American League.

The best pitcher in the National League is San Diego's Jake Peavy, who is tied for second in the league with eight victories and leads the league with a stellar 1.82 earned run average. L.A.'s Brad Penny is a close second, with eight wins and a 2.18 ERA. Both have been unhittable at times and consistently good throughout the first half of the season.

St. Louis first baseman Albert Pujols will get the starting nod for the all-star game next month, but my pick for the first half MVP is Milwaukee's Prince Fielder. Besides leading the league in dingers, Cecil's son is third in RBI with 51 and is a leader on a very young, talented Brewer team.

Still Too Early

Barry Bonds (at the time of this writing) is eight home runs away from passing Henry Aaron for the all-time home run lead. But he's still one torn hamstring away from the disabled list, too, so I continue to root against the Giants' druggie, I mean slugger.

Nobody really pays attention to baseball standings until after the all-star break. Part of that is due to the length of the baseball season, and another reason is that we're all watching the NBA playoffs, NASCAR, the Indy 500 and Triple Crown horse races. The French Open probably drew better TV ratings than a June regular season baseball game.

Still, as the weather heats up at home (though never as hot as here), so too will the interest in America's pastime. I'm glued already! Go, Brewers, go!